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ABSTRACT

Six teachers have successfully combined the team teaching technique with the humanities approach to learning in an Illinois high school. Offered to juniors and seniors as either a semester or full-year elective, a maximum of 150 students can be accommodated in a single class hour. The full year program is organized into six thematic units: Man and Nature; Man and Religion; Man and Humor; Man and Woman; Man and Adjustment; and Man and Technology. Large group presentations are interspersed among small group and individualized activities. Extensive use of area resources is made and values exploration is stressed. Credit is given for either English or social studies, but course content includes music, drama, art appreciation, and crafts. In place of textbooks, students rely on paperbacks and library resources for independent investigation. Instead of semester exams, each student selects a creative project and is assigned a personal project advisor. Student response has been enthusiastic and the teaching team has met requests for workshops on their program. All involved have participated in evaluation procedures, including the students who evaluate teachers. (Relevant ERIC documents and other resources on the program conclude the profile.) (Author/KSM)

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PROFILES OF PROMISE are descriptive brochures that highlight innovative social studies and social education practices, which teachers and administrators can easily adapt to their own classrooms or schools.

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THE PROPER STUDY OF MAN

There has been a growing concern among some educators about what they perceive as a trend toward a "curriculum of despair." More specifically, their concern is with the increasing preoccupation--particularly in social studies--with very complex social issues and problems that never seem to get "solved"--at least not in the classroom. They fear that the schools may be fostering a cynical generation, knowledgeable about the failure of the American Dream and man's inhumanity to man, but incapable of pursuing any dreams of its own. They are also concerned that such a curriculum draws support from similar trends in such quasi-educational institutions as the news media and the entertainment industry. What these educators would like to see is not an avoidance of relevant social problems, but a more balanced perspective in which awareness of man's success is not eclipsed by emphasis on his failure.

One way of providing such a balance is simply to make man the subject of study. If man is properly examined--his frustrations and hopes, his destructiveness and creativity, his inhumanity and humanity--one can put aside concerns about fostering a generation committed to cynicism and despair. A more balanced view of mankind can be presented by cutting across academic disciplines and using a team of instructors who have dissimilar backgrounds, experiences, and views. There is nothing new about the humanities approach, and many schools have experimented with team teaching; but good humanities programs, successfully taught by a partnership of teachers actually functioning as a team, are still exceptional. One of the exceptions is found at Ottawa High School in Ottawa, Illinois, where six teachers have successfully combined the team teaching technique with the humanities approach to learning.

TEAMING UP

Ottawa's Humanities program had an unpretentious beginning about five years ago at a series of informal discussions over coffee in the faculty room. Out of these discussions came a proposal to the administration which resulted in modest financial support for two teachers, Richard Clark and Ken Inman, to spend some time in developing a course outline. They did some research and visited several other schools which were already conducting humanities courses before putting together their own plan. After four years of operation, some changes have been made in content and organization, but the basic goals and objectives remain as they were originally set forth:

1. To aid students in exploring human values through a program in which it is recognized that the proper study of man is man.
2. To promote the intellectual growth of each student by studying man through a multidisciplinary framework involving literature, art, music, and history.
3. To provide a learning environment which is suited to students of different abilities and interests, not just to the "academic elite."
4. To give students experience in inductive learning.
5. To assist students in the clarification of their attitudes and values through free exposure to new materials and ideas.
6. To provide students with an introduction to the liberal arts, regardless of their post-graduation plans for further education or vocation.

In order to accomplish these aims, a team slicing through departmental boundaries was organized. Currently, Richard Clark heads the team which includes two other social studies teachers, an English teacher, an art teacher, and a music teacher. In most cases the teachers have some background or special interest in at least one area other than the one they teach. For example, Clark majored in English and history and has taught both; but he also has a strong personal interest in art. Each member of the team organizes and presents lessons drawing upon his own specialities, but then other members are expected to learn the presentations well enough to use them themselves. Thus, the interdisciplinary nature of the team is constantly increased. A common daily preparation period is provided so the team can meet regularly to plan its program.

THE PROGRAM

Humanities is offered to both juniors and seniors as either a semester or full-year elective. Seniors are given priority, since all humanities classes meet the same period, and there is a maximum of 150 students that can be accommodated in a single class hour. Students are allowed to take the course for

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either English or social studies credit, according to their needs for graduation requirement.

The full year program is organized into six thematic units: "Man and Adjustment," "Man and Nature," Man and Religion," "Man and Humor," "Man and Woman," and "Man and Technology." There is no textbook for the course, but a variety of paperbacks and other resources appropriate to each theme is provided. The program relies heavily on library resources; some of the units may involve several days of library research by students independently investigating topics related to the unit theme. The library staff cooperates by frequently setting aside reference books, slides, recordings, and audio-visual equipment for use by the Humanities students.

The Humanities classes frequently meet in a large group in the auditorium for lectures and presentations by members of the team, guest speakers, or other students; but small group and individualized learning is also a regular feature of the program. While students gain the advantage of exposure to the special talents and personalities of all the team members, a personal touch is added by each student choosing one member as a project advisor at the beginning of each semester. Individual conferences between students and their advisors are a frequent occurrence, especially in regard to the semester projects required of all students in lieu of semester exams. One of the primary purposes of assigning these projects is to encourage individual creativity.

Nearly any kind of project is considered appropriate but must be approved in advance by the advisor. Students are encouraged to relate their projects to one of the course themes. The variety of projects submitted illustrates the flexibility of the program and the imagination of the students. Each year three or four students choose to work with an advisor to write poetry or drama. Macrame hangings, hooked rugs, ceramics, pottery, paintings, dioramas, models, and photographic displays are among the individual projects completed. One girl, with no previous experience, designed and made a full length gown. A boy, inspired by the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, constructed a model of a home designed to complement the physical environment of a chosen home site.

Group activities have also displayed the creative talents of the students. One major accomplishment was the students' own production of the popular rock opera, "Jesus Christ, Superstar." The students organized, directed, and performed the entire production. They even created original interpretive dances. After their performance in the school auditorium, they held repeat performances for the benefit of local churches.

A member of the teaching team, Nancy Clark, enlisted the aid of students to produce a synchronized slide/tape presentation for use as a teaching device in the course. "Who Will Answer?" a popular song recorded by Ed Ames, was chosen as the theme for the presentation. The song portrays a confused mind searching for answers to age-old questions that have universally troubled the minds of men. The search for answers leads to philosophers, politicians, teachers, and theologians. Students spent hours in the library searching for pictures to illustrate the lyrics, line by line. Working with Nancy Clark, the students made slides of the pictures they had chosen, organized them in sequence, and synchronized them with a tape recording of the song. The result was an extremely powerful audio-visual message that paved the way for class exploration of some of those universal questions and man's approaches to finding answers to them. Two more synchronized slide/tape presentations were organized by individual students as semester projects, and there are plans by other teachers to create still more.

Early in the school year, the music teacher, Doug Sisler, had required students to listen to unfamiliar musical styles and forms. Many of the students did so reluctantly, and the familiar question was, "Why do we have to do this?" Later, when "Who Will Answer?" was presented to the entire Humanities group, the teachers were pleased to note that no prompting was needed for students to recognize the musical form as a Gregorian chant. Following the presentation, the class found itself discussing not only the questions raised by the lyrics and slides, but also speculating on the rationale of the Gregorian chant as the medium used by the composer. In this and other activities popular music took on new dimensions as students began to recognize the rich musical heritage on which the music of any age is based.

SORTING OUT VALUES

Values exploration and clarification is a particularly important element in Humanities, as students are encouraged to think seriously about important and sensitive matters that are normally foreign to the school curriculum. In the unit on "Man and Woman," students were assigned to read Eric Fromm's The Art of Loving and identify the categories of love described in the book. Ralph Tolle then asked his students to conduct a search for pictures and photos which illustrated not only the kinds of love specified, but also their direct antitheses, such as violence, brutality, neglect, and loneliness. Questions like "When does love end?" were dealt with as students considered the emotional problems of men and women whose spouses had died.

For the study of "Man and Religion," some of the students were organized into panels of five to study religious denominations and report back to the class. For the most part, the denominations examined were those least represented in the community. The Salvation Army, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mennonites, Mormons, and the Jesus Movement were among those included. Each panel member studied the denomination from one of the following aspects: origins, history, liturgy, current problems, or outlook for the future.

Other students were assigned to work in small groups to construct a religion that would relate to the universal questions that religions respond to in all societies, and to write a brief "holy book" that would correspond to this hypothe-

continued

Creative macrame hangings were project choices for students Pam Olson and Shellie Peterson.

Richard

The final moments of "Gethsemane" from Jesus Christ, Superstar are interpreted by Humanities students Mary Bernardini and Walt Willey.

The "Team": Lef
Back Row: Ken I
Front Row: John

Cindy Freistad and Reggie Gage display their class projects. Reggie's represents his version of a "Frank Lloyd Wright" design.

Mary Marsh
designed and

ject choices
Peterson.

Richard Clark discusses artists and paintings with the Humanities students.

The "Team": Left to Right -
Back Row: Ken Inman, Ralph Tolle, Richard Clark
Front Row: John Fisher, Doug Sisler, Nancy Clark

m Jesus
Humanities
ley.

y their
his version

Mary Marsh models a first-time sewing effort she designed and made for her semester project.

tical faith. Still others made studies of various Oriental religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and Shintoism.

A professor of religion from a nearby college was invited as a guest speaker. Also invited to speak was J. C. Sullivan, a convert to Christianity who formerly served as a driver for the notorious Bonnie and Clyde gang. The fact that most of the students had seen the popular movie about the gang greatly heightened the interest in this event.

In studying "Man and Religion," the students did not rely entirely on second-hand references; they also visited various churches and interviewed clergymen and representatives of different faiths. On one occasion, the class travelled to Chicago to visit the churches of denominations not represented in their town, including a Buddhist temple.

Still another avenue to exploration of values was found when the class served as the audience for a show put on by students from the county's school for the mentally handicapped, which is located in Ottawa. This event was included as part of the study of "Man and Adjustment," in which literature, art, music, and history all contribute to the general theme.

Students consider adjustment within a literary framework by reading Theodore Rubin's Jordi--Lisa and David. The life and work of Vincent Van Gogh is used as a case study of the problems faced by artists and others with creative ability, who often are not understood or appreciated by their contemporaries. Music as a means of adjustment is also examined. Students observe the ways man uses music to express his emotions and concerns, such as happy music or protest songs. The song, "Vincent," from Don McLean's American Pie album provides a link between music and art in the study of Vincent Van Gogh. A historical perspective is added as students read and discuss John F. Kennedy's Profiles of Courage and consider the adjustments of heroic figures in the United States Senate who were faced with moral dilemmas in the course of their duties.

Since "Man and Adjustment" is the first unit in the course, the students' own problems of adjustment are not overlooked. For most students, this course represents the first exposure to team teaching, large group instruction, thematic organization, and the absence of semester exams. Adjustment to these new experiences are made easier for students by dealing with these matters at the beginning of the year.

John Fisher, the art teacher on the team, would be envied by many of his colleagues in other systems for one unique resource available at Ottawa High School. Years ago, a local patron of the arts began the practice of donating art works to the school and set up a special fund to continue acquisitions. Donations of originals and professional copies are still regularly received from a gallery in the Chicago area. The collection, which is openly displayed on the corridor walls of the school, represents a wide array of periods and styles. There are approximately 300 items, some of which have been appraised at values from $6,000 to $10,000; and the total collection has been estimated at a value of approximately a half-million dollars. Although the collection is used in a variety of ways, it is particularly useful in the unit on "Man and Adjustment" when students are taken into the corridors to find examples of human adaptation in the various works displayed.

GROWING POPULARITY

The popularity of the Humanities program at Ottawa is evidenced in a variety of ways. Approximately one-fourth of the seniors elect the program, and about 80% of the students enrolled for the first semester stay on for the full year. Two students who took the course in their junior year volunteered in their senior year to serve as an aide and a secretary for the team. Five other teachers in the school have individually approached the team leader to express a desire to become members of the team.

The program has attracted attention elsewhere, and Richard Clark finds himself responding to many inquiries about the program from teachers in other schools. At the request of Illinois' Regional Center for Inservice Training, the Ottawa team was invited to put on a humanities and team teaching workshop. The team was given full responsibility for organizing and conducting the workshop, which was attended by about 80 teachers. Approximately 15 Humanities students from Ottawa also took part, lending their own perspectives on the humanities approach to learning. The workshop was videotaped for the benefit of others who might be interested, and the tapes are available from the regional center.

Until the Humanities program was introduced, class field trips for students at Ottawa High were not very common. The Humanities team, on the other hand, has made extensive use of area resources, including a visit to the county environmental center while studying "Man and Nature," a visit to a power plant while studying "Man and Technology," and a visit to a Jewish synagogue in a neighboring city while studying "Man and Religion." Apparently as a result of the example set by Humanities, field trips for other courses are on the increase. The precedents set by the Humanities team also seem to have encouraged other teachers in the school toward more experimentation with such things as individualized learning, independent projects, and student evaluation of the program.

EVALUATION

Besides the various guest speakers invited to participate in the program, a general invitation has been extended to school administrators, school board members, and peer professionals to visit the program in operation and to assist in its evaluation. All Humanities students are given the opportunity to participate in evaluation as well.

Each teacher receives from each of his students a survey, ranking his performance in twelve areas: knowledge of subject, clarity of explanations, fairness, classroom control, attitude toward students, ability to stimulate interest, enthu-

continued

siasm for the subject, attitude toward student opinions, encouragement of student participation, sense of humor, planning and preparation, and assignment policy. The students are also asked to evaluate the program in terms of success in meeting course objectives and the value of such specific procedures as library research, field trips, and project work. On the average, students have tended to rank the program from "good" to "very good," but as might be expected there are varieties of opinion.

Some students, possibly attracted by the prospect of having no semester exams, have enrolled in what they expected to be a "pushover," only to find that Humanities demanded more of them than traditional courses. Others have found that Humanities has opened new vistas for them and feel that for the first time their creative instincts have really been stimulated. The team pays close attention to these evaluation results and constantly searches for ways to improve the program and make it more responsive to student needs.

One of the most significant kinds of evaluation has been found to be the informal peer evaluation that naturally results from team teaching. One team member explained it this way: "In any situation where two or more teachers 'team teach,' there is a good result--namely, a push to work to one's best ability and to be self-critical. This is due, I feel, just to the simple fact that 'someone is watching.' In working as a team, we are constantly evaluating what the others are doing and are kept looking sharply at ourselves as well."

One shortcoming of the program that is currently being examined by the team is the heavy emphasis the course places on Western culture. The teachers believe the tendency to give inadequate attention to non-Western culture is partly because of their own academic training and partly due to the instructional materials available to them. Consideration is now being given to ways of overcoming this, since the team believes that the proper study of man is man--not just Western Man. So long as this concern for proper balance and perspective continues, Ottawa High School need not be concerned about developing a "curriculum of despair."

ERIC DOCUMENTS

ED 033 068 - Concepts of Team Teaching - MF - $.65, HC - $3.29. Identifies three types of team teaching, the teacher-to-teacher and teacher-to-student relationships, grading techniques, and facilities connected with each.

ED 055 044 - Team Teaching: Bibliographies in Education, No. 22 - MF - $.65, HC - $3.29. This 554-item bibliography contains citations of materials published between 1960 and 1971 relating to all aspects of team teaching.

ED 061 145 - Social Studies: World History Through Art and Music - MF - $.65, HC - $3.29. A description of a course emphasizing the ways art and music reflect society; students explore attitudes and values of different periods in the western world.

ED 066 768 - An Interdisciplinary Approach: An English-Social Studies-Art-Music Seminar, Senior High School - MF - $.65, HC - $3.29. A description of a proposed course with an English and social studies core, enriched by the introduction of art and music.

For more information

WRITE:

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The National Humanities Faculty provides consultant services to schools for a total of up to 20 days a year. Teachers in the school must draw up a plan that would involve the faculty in informal sessions with teachers aimed at enlivening the teaching of the humanities.

READ:

Goldman, Frederick and Linda R. Burnett. Need Johnny Read? Practical Methods to Enrich Humanities Courses Using Films and Film Study. Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum/Standard, 1971.

Miller, Bernard S. "The Old Humanities and the New," The Humanities Journal. December 1972. pp. 6-7, 19.

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